

and reservations about specific parts of the plan. Nearly 30 percent were not sure how they felt or had no opinion at all.

In a series of town hall meetings I recently had in my district in south Alabama, I received more questions regarding this plan and how it would impact the seniors in my district and their families. These questions and the survey results are not surprising. Such sweeping changes in a program as important as Medicare, which has basically remained consistent since its inception since the 1960s, undoubtedly has caused some confusion.

In an effort to help answer some of these questions and help clear up some of the clouds of confusion that exist, I will be hosting two senior citizen seminars on Monday, June 7, in my district in south Alabama. The primary focus of these events is to focus the attention on the Medicare bill.

I am pleased that representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services will be in attendance to help answer questions, as well as my friend and our colleague, the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY), who will also be on hand to discuss this important issue. Before beginning his outstanding service here in the Congress, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) was a practicing physician. And he is well qualified not only as a legislator but also as someone who has participated in the medical profession for so many years of his life.

□ 2015

Moreover, I have representatives from the Social Security Administration as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs to answer other questions that are pertinent to our senior citizens at this twilight of their lives.

My hope is that these two seminars, the first in Fairhope, Alabama, and the second in Mobile, will do much to provide useful information to help answer questions that are so important and so timely.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage my colleagues on both sides of the political aisle to do likewise in their district, to try to reach out and help explain some of the questions that still exist with this new law. The assistance this program is providing is desperately needed by our senior citizens.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FEENEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KIND addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TERRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CARSON of Indiana addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING OUR CONGRESSIONAL PAGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is my sincerest pleasure that I rise to recognize and compliment the congressional pages that will be ending their term of service this week.

The House pages have made up the critically important staff that has kept the House floor running smoothly for over 200 years. This 2003-2004 school year pages were selected from hundreds of applicants following an incredibly competitive process that scrutinizes their individual achievements in academics, leadership, and complement to social and civic service.

Page duties include delivering all types of correspondence and legislative materials throughout the Capitol and House office buildings, answering phones in the Members cloak room, relaying messages, flying flags over the Capitol, and preparing the House floor for session and many other duties.

These pages have spent their entire junior year of high school in Washington, D.C. living, taking classes, and working for the House. The typical day of a page begins very early at 5:45 a.m. or 6 a.m. to eat breakfast prior to attending classes for school at 6:45 a.m. At 10 a.m. their legislative work day begins and lasts until the House adjourns in the evening and sometimes into the wee early morning hours. These individuals, I think, Mr. Speaker, have demonstrated their true commitment to playing an important role in our Nation's future by learning and working here in the Nation's Capitol.

We honor those pages that have shown the same generosity of spirit and depth of intelligence and capacity for human service that is so important of our leaders. These exceptional students have consistently displayed their dedication, intelligence, and concern throughout their time as a page in Congress. They stand out among their peers not only because of their many achievements but also the disciplined manner in which they meet all challenges.

I compliment the administration and those that have guided these pages. And although these pages have already accomplished a great deal, these young people possess unlimited potential. The House pages are young men and women of character, ambition and initiative who have made a significant contribution to the United States House of Representatives and have learned well the

value of hard work and commitment. Their efforts and dedication are very much appreciated and our very best wishes bestowed upon them in all of their future endeavors that I am sure for some will include elected office, including Congress. I suspect all will be leaders in their community.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives, we extend our thanks and our highest praise and congratulations to each congressional page.

AMERICA NEEDS AN ENERGY POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to ask the question, How long can America afford to not have an energy policy in place?

For many years we had cheap energy in this country. We had oil for over a decade at about \$10 a barrel and natural gas around \$2 a thousand, but that has all changed.

Today we have oil constantly popping past the \$40-per-barrel mark. The natural gas that we were putting in the ground today for next winter's heating \$6.47 a thousand. Last year the world was shocked when we put it in the ground at \$4.60 a thousand for the next heating season during the winter.

The question I ask again and again is when will we put an energy policy on the President's desk so he can sign it? He is the first President to continually ask Congress for an energy policy, an energy plan. Other Presidents ignored it. We have an education policy, but no energy policy. We have a defense policy, but no energy policy. We have an ag policy, but no energy policy. A transportation policy, an environmental policy, trade policies, but no energy policy.

I live within 5 miles in Pennsylvania of Drake's Well, the first oil well which was drilled in 1859; and when oil was discovered, it changed the world. It brought about the industrial revolution and the modernization of our society, and today the world consumes 80 million barrels daily. We use about one fourth, 20 million barrels; and our use continues to rise.

The alarming fact is that China and India are now growing faster in energy use than us and competing with us for foreign oil. And as the world economy begins to really grow, and it is, the demand continues to rise. Our problem is 50 percent of our oil comes from unstable parts of the world. We have no control over oil prices. We have no control over energy costs. And coupling that problem with the natural gas issue, which is new, just a few years ago it was \$2 a thousand. Today, they continue to sky rocket. Four years ago, it was less than 3, usually 2-something. Last year, we were putting in the ground at \$4.70 at this time of the year.